

1 chairman of the University Curriculum Committee, president of the Faculty Senate, and a
2 professor in the Department of History; and in 1987, he became the fifth president of the
3 university serving in that capacity for twenty-three years before his retirement in June 2010;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, in 1989, on the fiftieth anniversary of founding of the McNeese, Robert
6 Hebert formally adopted the motto "Excellence With a Personal Touch!" for the university;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Robert Hebert was a gifted individual and mentor to generations of
9 college students, who were bolstered by his motivation and who strived to create successful
10 lives and a better world; and

11 WHEREAS, he initiated higher academic standards that resulted in better ACT
12 averages, improved student retention, and a rise in increased enrollment; and

13 WHEREAS, new campus construction and renovation projects included the addition
14 of Hardtner Hall, Frascch Hall, the Shearman Fine Arts Center, and new dormitories; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Hebert foresaw the essential link between advanced educational
16 opportunities and regional economics; he established the Banners Cultural Series to
17 strengthened the vital link between McNeese and area industries; and

18 WHEREAS, he negotiated a partnership between the Southwest Louisiana Economic
19 Development Alliance, the parish of Calcasieu, and the city of Lake Charles to establish the
20 Southwest Louisiana Entrepreneurial and Economic Development Center (SEED) and placed
21 this entrepreneurial research center on the university campus; and

22 WHEREAS, SEED became a focal point of expanding global economies fueled by
23 escalating growth of local petrochemical, aviation, maritime, agricultural, gaming, and
24 tourism businesses in Southwest Louisiana; and

25 WHEREAS, Dr. Hebert worked diligently to increase private fundraising efforts and
26 increased the assets of the McNeese Foundation from \$1 million to over \$55 million; this
27 precipitated in the addition of eighty-four new endowed departmental chairs and
28 professorships; and

29 WHEREAS, sometimes the mettle of a man is tested under the most horrific
30 circumstances; in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita, nearly every building on campus

1 sustained damages, with estimations at over \$30 million; and

2 WHEREAS, during the recovery period, Dr. Hebert exemplified self-reliance,
3 altruism, and dedication; he and his team moved heaven and earth to make McNeese fully
4 operational again, to re-establish classes just five weeks after the storm, and to successfully
5 hold graduation exercises at the end of the fall semester 2005; and

6 WHEREAS, during his tenure at McNeese, Robert Hebert had a profound effect on
7 students and faculty who were enlightened in some manner by his motivation; he shall
8 always be remembered for his tireless work ethic, his humor, his intellect, his enigmatic
9 smile, and his genuine rapport with everyone he met; and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Robert Hebert was a great ambassador for McNeese, an excellent
11 faculty recruiter, and during his forty-one years at the university, was upheld to be one of
12 its most beloved and well-respected professors; and

13 WHEREAS, Dr. Hebert shall be remembered as an extraordinary individual who
14 loved to travel and immerse himself in the history and environs of far-off places; he was
15 considered to be a larger than life figure who was always in search of the next adventure; he
16 was an historian first, last, and always; and

17 WHEREAS, Robert is survived by his wife, the former Lilly Ann Vincent and their
18 four sons, Greg, Chris, Gerry, and Edward; all his sons have completed their undergraduate
19 degrees at McNeese and all have obtained medical doctorates; and

20 WHEREAS, Robert Hebert witnessed extraordinary advancements in learning
21 opportunities; he shared his years of invaluable knowledge and experience with others; he
22 proved himself to be man of many talents, a man of his word, and a man whose dedication
23 to scholarship has been a priceless gift left to the state of Louisiana.

24 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
25 express heartfelt condolences upon the passing of Dr. Robert Hebert, former president of
26 McNeese State University.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
28 acknowledge the legacy and the lifetime of dedication to academic excellence forged by Dr.
29 Robert Hebert on behalf of the betterment of public education and scholarship in the state
30 of Louisiana.

